

## DO THE PREACHERS CONTROL THE CHURCH?

A good deal has been written lately on the question as to whether the Presbyterian Church is democratic or not, and the charge has been made by some writers that the preachers rule the Church and the membership has practically no say in the government of the Church. Now let us look at this charge for a few minutes.

The preacher is ordained by the Presbytery and thereby becomes a member of that body. But this does not give him much authority. Let us follow him through the various courts. He becomes a member of the church session by the vote of the people when they call him as their pastor and he has been installed. Ordinarily there are from three to a dozen or more ruling elders in the session, put there in exactly the same way. The preacher is by courtesy made the moderator of the session. Instead of his ruling this body he ordinarily does not have a vote on any question that comes before it, for the moderator can only vote in case of a tie. If he has more influence in the decisions of the session than any other member, it must be due to one of two conditions, either the other members of the session are convinced that his views, if he expresses them, are the wisest presented, or else they have not the courage to oppose him, and so go on record as approving something, which, in reality, they do not endorse. In either case complaint against the preacher comes with poor grace from men who will not stand up for their convictions.

Does the preacher represent the people in the Presbytery? He is a member of that body because he has been ordained to the gospel ministry. There are comparatively few preachers in any Presbytery who are not pastors. Many of those who are not are engaged in some form of church work to which they have been called by some of the established agencies of the Church. Those who attend the meetings of Presbyteries will find that usually the preachers who are not pastors do not undertake to exert any special influence in the consideration of matters concerning the churches.

If the pastor does not represent his people in the Presbytery, whom does he represent? It is very rarely the case that a pastor does anything in Presbytery from a selfish motive. If the Session has any idea that their pastor is not going to represent the Church properly in the Presbytery, they have a very simple remedy. They are expected to appoint one of their own number to be a member of the Presbytery. They can appoint one who will represent the Church, and at least counteract any influence the pastor may have, if he does not satisfactorily represent them.

And it should always be remembered that in probably every Presbytery in our Church, there are more seats belonging to ruling elders than there are belonging to preachers. If each Session did its duty in appointing one of its number to go to Presbytery, and the one appointed did his duty in attending, the elders would always be in the majority. If the Session is afraid to trust its pastor, then it ought to send its strongest member to Presbytery, and not do as is so often done, send the man who has nothing to do and who would like to have a trip.

Now, what is the case usually in Presbytery? The preachers, as a rule, regardless of the sacrifice necessary, and often at their own expense, go to Presbytery and stay through its Sessions. Some of the Sessions failed to appoint commissioners. Some of those ap-

pointed did not come. Others come late. Many stay only a day or so, and go home before the business is attended to. Suppose the preachers did the same way, how much of the Lord's business would be attended to by the Presbytery?

On the other hand, suppose every church had one of its best elders as a member of that body and all were present, what would be the result? Why, the elders could outvote the preachers every time, and the preachers would not complain, if they did, for they have great confidence in the eldership.

Conditions in the Synod are practically the same as they are in the Presbytery.

The General Assembly is the only court of the Church where the preachers are entitled to as many seats as are the elders. But it should be remembered that the members of the Assembly are elected by the Presbyteries. If the elders are present in the Presbytery, as they ought to be, they can elect anybody they choose, whether preachers or elders. If they are not there, they have no right to complain about those who are elected. One great trouble is that the Presbyteries do not always show proper wisdom in selecting their commissioners. This is true as to both preachers and elders. Often times men who are not at all informed as to church affairs and really very little interested in them are sent as commissioners to the Assembly. And their surprise is expressed at the actions taken by the body.

At a recent meeting of the Assembly a matter of vital importance to the Church was under discussion. In the midst of the debate an elder came in who had been loafing outside the church. Taking his seat near the writer, he asked what was being discussed. When he was told, he said: "Was that paper written by Dr. Blank?" Being informed that it was, he said, very sharply: "Then I am going to vote against it, I don't care what it is about." He paid no attention to the debate, but did vote against the paper that was before the Assembly. And there were many in the church who wondered why the Assembly took the action that it did. The next day the elder sought out the writer and apologized for the way he had spoken the day before, though there was nothing personal in the case, and said that if he had known what was in that paper he would have voted for it.

The elders ought to be the bone and sinew of the Church, and when they fully awaken to the great responsibility of sharing to their utmost with the preachers in the government and work of the Church, a blessed day will have dawned for the kingdom of God upon earth.

## SINGING IN THE SUNDAY-SCHOOL.

Music is one of the most important elements in the proper Sunday-school. Nothing so holds the children, or advances the interest of all. If poor singing kills the sermon in the Church, it more than murders the power of the lesson. No teacher can properly get the truth into the heart of a child without song.

Yet less attention is paid to the music of the Sunday-school than to the Church service. A well-trained choir is considered necessary to the one, any kind of leadership passes in the Sunday-school. Hours for practice are arranged for and no choir would even undertake the commonest hymns without previous practice, while neither leader nor choir have any idea what the hymns will be till the superintendent calls out the number. We rarely hear of any special music prepared for this part of the worship. No effort is made to lift up the

sentiment of the children by giving them higher class music.

The class of Sunday-school music is often very inferior from a musical point of view. "Something easy to sing," as if it were not a good thing to put up to the children more difficult music. Our observation is that the Sunday-school will take hold of and learn new and difficult music with more zest than the congregation. They are not so much afraid of making mistakes, neither does their voice upset them so easily. They are more responsive to leadership in this as in other things. The words and thought of much Sunday-school music is of a most anemic order. Very few are the hymns of instruction, and the repetition often becomes monotonous. Yet the hymn may be made wonderfully instructive; planting truth in the heart, and thus teaching in a pleasing way the truths of God's word.

We ought to give far more attention to the music of the Sunday-school. The session should take as much care of this as of the music of the Church service. Especially should the young people of the Church be taught music. In the country, the old-fashioned singing schools did a wonderful amount of good. In the Steele Creek Church, every other summer a ten days' singing was held at which time the children were taught the rudiments of music. This was further kept up by "singing bees" through the winter months, so that it was not an unusual thing to have several hundred people on the floor of the Church who could sing by note. It need not be said that the musical part of the worship of that Church was a delight, no matter who was in the pulpit. There is nothing in which the young delight more than getting together to sing. Have a singing class in the Sunday-school.

The same hymn-book should be used in both Sunday-school and Church service. The combination book perhaps has not been published, but our Church ought to issue one. It is no disparagement of our present hymn-book to say that it does not suit both these purposes. It was not intended to do so. Our Publication Committee ought to take the lead in presenting this matter to our next Assembly. We need a revival of singing in our Churches, for a singing Church is a conquering Church. The music and hymn sung ought to co-ordinate with the lesson. We do not agree with the minister who said, "It matters not what people sing, so they sing." It does matter. The message may get its gathering momentum from the hymns sung, or may be driven home by a hymn following. There should not be too many hymns. A few well sung will be far more effective than a large number, one following another.

Variety in the exercises is even more necessary in the case of young people than of older ones.

Above all with the brightest of music, let there be instruction in the fundamental truths of our gospel.

Use the Sunday-school more as a place of grand uplifting and instructive music. Then it may be there will not be so many dumb Christians in the pews at 11 A. M. Sunday morning.

A. A. L.

## RAILROADS AND PROHIBITION.

One of the greatest object lessons in temperance has been given by the railroads of this country. The officials found sometime ago that the efficiency of their men was seriously interfered with by their use of liquor. At first it was feared that the cry would be raised by the men that their personal liberty was being interfered with, if anything was